

JANUARY 16, 1963

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(PICTURE COVERAGE PLANNED)

MILLEDGEVILLE, GA., JAN. 16 (UPI)--FORMER U2 PILOT FRANCIS GARY POWERS TOLD A DIVORCE COURT YESTERDAY THAT HIS WIFE WAS AN HABITUAL DRUNK WHO SENT HIM "CHEAP" MAGAZINES IN A SOVIET PRISON AND NEGLECTED HIM TO SUCH AN EXTENT THAT "EVEN THE RUSSIANS GOT WORRIED."

ATTRACTIVE BARBARA GAY POWERS COUNTERED THAT IMPRISONMENT HAD LEFT HER HUSBAND A CHANGED MAN, "VOID OF ALL FEELING" EXCEPT BITTERNESS TOWARD HER. "ALL HE WANTS IS HIS MONEY," SHE SOBBED.

A JURY OF 12 MARRIED MEN WAS EXPECTED TO RECEIVE THE CASE TODAY AND DECIDE WHETHER THE 33-YEAR-OLD PILOT WHOSE ABORTIVE RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHT OVER RUSSIA IN 1960 SPARKED AN INTERNATIONAL CONTROVERSY MUST PAY HIS WIFE ALIMONY.

POWERS, 33, PETITIONED FOR DIVORCE FROM HIS WIFE OF EIGHT YEARS LAST AUGUST, SEVEN MONTHS AFTER HIS RELEASE FROM PRISON IN EXCHANGE FOR SOVIET SPY RUDOLPH ABEL. HE HAD SERVED 20 MONTHS OF A 10-YEAR SENTENCE FOR ESPIONAGE. POWERS CHARGED HIS WIFE WAS HABITUALLY DRUNK AND ABUSIVE. MRS. POWERS, 28, FILED A COUNTERSUIT, CHARGING THAT POWERS FAILED TO TREAT HER LIKE AN AVERAGE AMERICAN HOUSEWIFE.

THE HANDSOME, SOFT-SPOKEN POWERS, WHOSE TESTIMONY AT TIMES BROUGHT APPLAUSE FROM SPECTATORS IN THE PACKED COURT ROOM, SAID HE WENT AS LONG AS 45 DAYS WITHOUT A LETTER FROM HIS WIFE WHILE IN PRISON. SHE WAS SO DELINQUENT IN HER WRITING, HE SAID, THAT IT BECAME A MATTER OF CONCERN TO BOTH AMERICAN AND RUSSIAN OFFICIALS IN MOSCOW.

HE SAID HE RECEIVED SEVERAL PACKAGES FROM HIS WIFE BUT SOME CONTAINED SUCH "CHEAP MAGAZINES" THAT HE HAD TO REQUEST OTHER READING MATTER.

"THE ONLY PERSON WHO EVER MISTREATED ME WHILE I WAS IN PRISON IN RUSSIA WAS MY WIFE, BARBARA," POWERS SAID.

MRS. POWERS TESTIFIED THAT SHE MARRIED POWERS "FOR COMPANIONSHIP, LOVE AND CHILDREN BUT I DIDN'T HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THAT." SHE SAID SHE WAS UNAWARE AT THE TIME THAT POWERS HAD BEEN ASSIGNED BY THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY (CIA) TO MAKE U2 FLIGHTS OVER RUSSIA AND ACCUSED HIM OF TAKING "OUR FUTURE INTO HIS HANDS WITHOUT MY KNOWLEDGE."

AFTER THE NEWS BROKE THAT HER HUSBAND'S PLANE HAD BEEN SHOT DOWN OVER RUSSIA, SHE SAID, "THE PHONE RANG CONSTANTLY AND THERE WERE REPORTERS EVERYWHERE. I COULDN'T BREATHE OR SLEEP. I JUST SHOOK ALL THE TIME." SHE SAID SHE "SUFFERED JUST AS MUCH AS GARY DID WHEN HE WAS IN PRISON."

SHE SAID THAT WHEN POWERS RETURNED TO THIS COUNTRY "HE TOOK ALL HIS BITTERNESS OUT ON ME." SHE DENIED SHE WAS AN EXCESSIVE DRINKER.

Approved For Release 2000/06/30 : CIA-RDP75-00001R000400130003-7
MENT. ONE WITNESS, MRS. CHARLENE JUSTICE, SAID HER FATHER AND MOTHER HAD EXPERIENCED SERIOUS DOMESTIC TROUBLE AFTER MRS. POWERS ARRIVED.

MRS. JUSTICE SAID SHE ONCE SURPRISED HER FATHER AND MRS. POWERS "INDECENTLY DRESSED" AT THE HOME OF MRS. POWERS' MOTHER. SHE SAID MRS. POWERS WAS ATTIRED IN A HOUSECOAT AND HER FATHER IN TROUSERS AND A T-SHIRT.

MRS. POWERS DENIED THE ALLEGED INCIDENT EVER HAPPENED AND SAID SHE NEVER HAD SEEN MRS. JUSTICE.

POLICE OFFICER JIMMY NIBLETT SAID HE AND ANOTHER OFFICER ARRESTED MRS. POWERS ON A "DRUNK DRIVING" CHARGE JUNE 22, 1961.

POWERS, NOW A TEST PILOT FOR LOCKHEED AIRCRAFT CORPORATION IN CALIFORNIA, WAS ON THE STAND AROUND FOUR HOURS. ATTORNEY ROBERT GREEN, REPRESENTING MRS. POWERS, QUESTIONED THE PILOT ABOUT HIS PATRIOTISM.

POWERS SAID HE HAD NEVER VOTED AND DID NOT KNOW WHO WAS THE VICE PRESIDENT WHILE HE WAS IN PRISON. HIS IMPRISONMENT, HOWEVER, "MADE ME APPRECIATE THIS COUNTRY QUITE A BIT," HE SAID, "BUT IT DIDN'T MAKE ME APPRECIATE MY WIFE."

ASKED BY GREEN WHAT HE THOUGHT OF THE HARSHIPS HIS WIFE ENDURED TO GO TO MOSCOW TO BE WITH HIM AT HIS TRIAL, POWERS REPLIED, "WHY, I'LL BET THERE WERE 5,000 PEOPLE HERE IN MILLEDGEVILLE WHO WOULD HAVE ENJOYED THE TRIP." SPECTATORS APPLAUDED.

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